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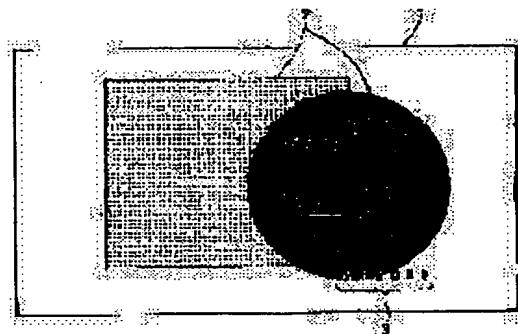
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(54) PRINTER

(57)Abstract:

PURPOSE: To enable printing output of such a synthetic picture image as to be able to discriminate easily a caption character irrespective of density or a color tone of a background picture, in a printer outputting a synthetic picture image of the background picture and caption character.

CONSTITUTION: A printer forms synthetic printing data based on data of the first picture image 2 and data of the second picture image 3 and outputs a synthetic picture image by the synthetic printing data. Both the printing data are compared with each other at a position where the first picture image and second picture image are piled upon each other and in the case where a difference in picture density is within a preset density range, a picture synthesizing processing part which allows at least either one out of density of a sphere of the first picture image 2 upon which the second picture image 3 is piled and the density of the second picture image 3 to change is provided.



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5 [What is Claimed is:]

[Claim 1] A printer generating a composite printing data
based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture
image and a second print data corresponding to a second
picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image
10 composited based on said composite printing data, the printer
being characterized in comprising an image composite
processing part in which the first and second print data
corresponding to the position in which said first picture
image and second picture image overlap each other are compared
5 image and second picture image overlap each other are compared
and if the difference between the image color shown by the
first print data and that shown by the second print data is
within a predetermined range, at least one of the color of the
first picture image and the color of the second picture image
10 is changed in the overlapping area of said first picture image
and said second picture image.

[Claim 3] The printer as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2,
wherein the data of said first picture image in the
overlapping area of said first and second picture images is
15 deleted, and the data of said second picture image is inserted
into the part where the data of said first picture image is
deleted.

[Claim 4] The printer as claimed in any one of claim 1 to
claim 3, wherein said second picture image is constituted with
20 characters, mark or the combination thereof.

[Claim 2] A printer generating a composite printing data
based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture
image and a second print data corresponding to a second
picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image
25 [Field of the Invention]

The present invention relates to printers, and especially relates to, in a printer for compositing a background image with a character information image, such as caption characters, to print and output, the art for making 5 the character information image easy to discriminate by adjusting the density or color of the background image and the character information image.

[Prior Arts]

- 10 For example, to make a printed matter for explaining a product, one print image is required to be outputted and formed by compositing a photographic image of the product, which is prepared as the background in advance, with a character image for explaining the product, such as a caption, 15 character, mark or the like. Fig. 10 shows an example as described above conceptually, and shows a picture image printed by a printer. In this figure, a background image 12 and a character image 13 are present in a print area 11. The background image 12 is a background picture image such as a 20 photograph, and the character image 13 is an character picture image, such as a caption, character, mark or the like.
- As one of the methods for compositing two images, that is, the background image and the character image to print and output by a printer, the method is present which takes the 25 print data of the background image together with the print

data of the character image into the printer and composites these data in the printer to print as one print data. With this method, a print in which characters are composited with an image such as a product is able to be formed.

- 5 As a conventional method for compositing the print data of the background image with the print data of the character image, the method is present which directly applies the background image data and character image data so as to utilize as the print data. In this case, the print image 10 printed and outputted is the one in which the character image is directly superimposed on the background image.

[Subjects To Be Solved By the Invention]

In the conventional printer as described above, the 15 character image data is directly applied on the background image data, and the character image is just superimposed on the background image. Accordingly, the superimposed character image may be very difficult to be distinguished or cannot be distinguished at all, depending on the density, color or 20 design of the background image.

For example, in the aforementioned picture image shown in Fig. 10, the background image 12 has a high density image part like black, and the character image 13 is also an picture image of high density like black. Accordingly, in the area in 25 which the character image 13 is superimposed on the high

density part of the background image 12, it is difficult to distinguish the character image 13 from the background image 12.

In the image composite method directly superimposing the character image on the background image, the image printed and outputted after composition may becomes an image in which either one of the background image and the character image having greater density has priority. Accordingly, for example, in the case of monochrome printing, if the density of the background is greater, the superimposed character image cannot be distinguished. In the case of color printing, if the tone of the background is similar to that of the character image, the boundary between the background image and the character image becomes unclear, and thus recognition of the character image may become difficult.

To prevent the inconvenience caused by superimposing the character image on the background image as described above, the method is proposed in which the character image is arranged in the area having no background image, or arranged in the area of the background image having different density or tone from that of the character image. However, by selecting the position having different density or tone from that of the character image as well as low image density in the background image, as the position to place the character image, such inconvenience occurs wherein degree of freedom in

design is limited.

The method is also present for making the character image stand out by deleting the print data of the background image in the peripheral area of the character image, that is, by reversing the background image around the character image, so as to make the character image easy to distinguish. However, if a part of the background image is reversed to white, for example, a part of a product image in the background image may be lost, and thus such inconvenience occurs wherein the information about the product becomes incomplete.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method which is able to discriminate the composited characters and the like easily without fail, no matter what density, color, design the background has.

Another object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method which is able to composite the background image with the character image with limiting the lack of the background image information to a minimum.

Still another object of the present invention is, in the printer compositing the background image with the character image and the like to output, to provide a composition method

which is able to reduce the restriction of the degree of freedom in design about the position in which the character image is composited with the background image.

5 [Method for Solving the Subjects]

For solving the aforementioned problems, the printer of the present invention is a printer generating a composite printing data based on a first print data corresponding to a first picture image and a second print data corresponding to a second picture image, and printing and outputting a picture image composited based on the composite printing data, the printer being characterized in comprising an image composite processing part in which the first and second print data corresponding to the position in which the first picture image 10 and second picture image overlap each other are compared and if the difference between the image density or color shown by the first print data and that shown by the second print data is within a predetermined range, at least one of the density or color of the first picture image and the density or color 15 of the second picture image is changed in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second picture image.

The data of the first picture image in the overlapping area of the first and second picture images may be deleted, and the data of the second picture image may be inserted into 20 the part where the data of the first picture image is deleted.

[Action]

5 With such an arrangement, the image composite processing part provided in the printer generates a composite print data from the print data of the first picture image, such as a photograph, and the print data of the second picture image, such as characters or a mark, and a composite picture image, 10 in which, for example, a caption character image is composited with a background image, is printed and outputted based on the composite print data. The image composite processing part compares the density or tone of the first and second picture images in the overlapping area of the first and second picture images, for example, by a print dot unit, and, if the difference therebetween is within the range set in advance, changes at least one of the density or tone of the first picture image and that of the second picture image in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second 15 picture image.

Namely, when the density or tone in the overlapping area of the first picture image and the second picture image is similar to the density or tone of the second picture image, at least one of the density or tone of the first and second 20 picture images is changed, thereby such a picture image is

able to be printed and outputted wherein the density or tone in the second picture image area is different from that of the first picture image. Accordingly, the picture image in which the caption characters are composited is able to be printed and outputted in the state of being easily discriminated irrespective of the density or tone of the background image.

By making the density or tone changing area of the first picture image not only the overlapping area of the first and second picture images but also the area including the periphery of the second picture image, the second picture image is made to be easily discriminated without changing the density or tone of the second picture image. Accordingly, for example, even if the background image changes with a fine pattern, the composition is performed in the state of easy discrimination without changing the density or tone of the caption characters or the like in the fine pattern. Further, the first picture image around the second picture image is changed only its density or tone, and is never reversed. Thus lack of the information of the first picture image, such as a photograph, is able to be limited to a minimum.

By deleting the data of the first picture image in the overlapping area of the first and second picture images and inserting the data of the second picture image instead thereof the data of the first picture image is able to be replaced with the data of the second picture image. Thus, for example

in the case of compositing a black background image with white caption characters, the influence of the background image is removed with a simple method, to make the caption characters easy to discriminate.

[Preferred Embodiments of the Invention]

Embodiments of the present invention are described below referring to the drawings. Firstly, described is a printer for performing single color printing relating to a first embodiment of the present invention. Fig. 1 is a picture image printed and outputted by the printer of the present invention, in which a background image 2, such as a photograph, is composited with caption characters 3 in the print area of a recording paper. A part of the caption characters 3 and the high density part of the background image 2 are overlapped. The caption characters 3 are originally designated to be printed and displayed as a black line drawing. However, in the overlapping part with the background 2, the caption characters are printed in reverse white to the background image 2 with the reversed density.

The image data for printing and outputting the picture image shown in Fig. 1 is dealt with as the print data of print dot defined in Fig. 4. The print dot is a unit pixel constituting a picture image. In Fig. 4, a picture image 8 is shown in a print area 7, and the print area 7 is constituted

with 1024 dots arranged in the direction perpendicular to the print direction A and 1280 lines arranged in the print direction A with the 1024 dots as one line. The position of the print dot constituting the picture image 8 is defined with 5 the line number and dot number in the print area 7. The dot number and line number constituting the print area 7 are different depending on the size of the print area 7 and the pixel density of the picture image 8.

In the same way as the picture image 8 in Fig. 4, the 10 print dot of the caption characters 3 in the picture image in Fig. 1 is defined with the line number and dot number of the print area 7. The print data about the caption characters is inputted separately from the print data of the background image, and is treated as another data. However, the position 15 of the print dot constituting each picture image is treated with the common line number and dot number. The position capable of displaying the caption characters in the print area 7 is decided with the dot number and line number in the print area 7 in advance. For example, in the printer set to be able 20 to enter 20 caption characters, the area capable of displaying 20 caption characters is set with the line number and dot number in the predetermined position within the print area 7.

Fig. 5 shows a caption character drawing part 10 in the caption character display area 9 as a print dot data. In this 25 example, the caption character display area 9 is defined as

the print dots in the area from 700th line to 715th line and from 1000th dot to 1015th dot in the print area 7 (Fig. 4). The caption character display area 9 may be decided in advance as the specification of the printer, or may be set by a user 5 optionally.

The procedure of the image process for outputting the picture image, which is constituted with the print dot as described above and in which the density of the caption characters 3 is reversed as shown in Fig. 1, is described in 10 detail referring to Fig. 6. Fig. 6 is a flowchart showing the process for outputting the print data for one line of the composite image generated by compositing the background image with the caption image.

When the image data to be the background and the caption 15 character data are transmitted to the printer and image composition is designated, the image print data for one line is read in step 101. For example, the case that the nth line is started to be read from the first dot, and the print dot data of the mth dot is read in step 101 is assumed for 20 description.

When the image data for one line is read in step 101, it is discriminated whether or not the line number read in step 101 (the nth line) is the line number including the dot number of the caption character display area, in step 102. If the nth 25 line is discriminated to be the line including the dot number

of the caption character display area, the process advances to step 103 to continue the composite process. If the nth line is not discriminated to be the line including the dot number of the caption character display area, the process advances to step 109, and the background image data for one line of the nth line is directly outputted as the print data.

In step 103, the discrimination is performed whether or not the print dot (the mth dot) in the line read in step 101 (the nth line) is the print dot in the position overlapping with the caption character drawing part. If the mth dot is in the same position as the print dot of the caption character drawing part, the process advances to step 104 to continue the process. If the mth dot does not overlap the caption character drawing part, the process advances to step 108, and the print dot of the background image is not objected to the reversing process and is outputted as the print data directly. In step 104, the density of the print dot of the background image is calculated for the print dot discriminated to overlap with the caption character drawing part.

In step 105, the discrimination is performed whether or not the density value of the print dot of the background image calculated in step 104 is larger than a threshold value of the density set in advance. The threshold value of the density set in advance decides the density of the background image for reversing the density of the caption character. Accordingly,

by adjusting the threshold value, the balance between the density of the caption character and that of the background is made appropriate, and the caption characters are displayed in the easiest state to be distinguished.

5 If the calculated value of the print dot density of the background is discriminated to be larger than the threshold value in step 105, the process advances to step 107 and the print dot data in the caption character drawing part corresponding to the print dot thereof is reversed to white data. If the calculated value of the print dot density of the background is smaller than the threshold value, the process advances to step 106, and the print dot data of the caption character drawing part corresponding to the print dot thereof is left as it is (black). The value of the print dot data is changed in this way is transmitted to a memory (unillustrated) and stored therein.

In step 108, the discrimination is performed whether or not the caption character display area is finished in the line read in step 101 (the nth line). Namely, it is discriminated whether or not the read mth dot is the dot number in the caption character display area. If the mth dot is not discriminated to be the last dot number in the caption character display area, the flow returns to step 103 and repeats the processes to step 108 for the next print dot (the m+1th dot) in the same line (the nth line). If the mth dot is

discriminated to be the last dot number in the caption character display area, the flow advances to step 109 and the print data for one line is outputted to the print part of the printer together with the print dot data which is stored in the memory and has adjusted the density as described in step 106. Then, the flow returns to step 101 and starts reading the print dot data of the next line (the n+1th line). This procedure is repeated until the print area of the picture image is finished.

10 By performing the process for each one line of the print picture image, and changing the density of the caption character part recognizing the picture image data by the print dot unit in accordance with the steps as described above, the print picture image as shown in Fig. 1, in which the density of the caption characters is reversed in the part overlapping with the background image, is able to be outputted. Accordingly, the density of the caption characters is reduced in the high density part of the background image, while the density of the caption characters is increased in the low density part of the background image. Thus, print and display is performed in the state that the caption characters are easily discriminated irrespective of the density of the background image.

A second embodiment of the present invention performing color printing is described. The picture image performed color

printing and outputted is similar to the picture image shown in Fig. 1 in appearance. The point different from the first embodiment is that the print data is resolved into the data of three colors due to color printing of the picture image.

5 The flow of an image signal in a color printer is described referring to Fig. 3. An image data from a computer or the like is inputted to an image data input part 20, and is outputted to the printing part of the printer from a print data output part 24 via a luminance density conversion

10 processing part 21, color conversion processing part 22 and a caption character composite processing part 23. The character data 27 of the caption characters is inputted to the caption character composite processing part 23. The luminance density conversion processing part 21, color conversion processing

15 part 22, caption character composite processing part 23 and print data output part 24 are each connected to a CPU (central processing unit) 25, and the CPU 25 is connected to a memory 26.

In the constitution as described above, the image signal

20 from a computer or video is inputted to the image data input part 20 as a video signal resolved into R (red), G (green) and B (blue). In the luminance density conversion processing part 21, the video signal data formed of R, G and B luminous signal

25 for displaying on the display is converted to the data about the density of each color of ink Dr, Dg and Db. For example,

the luminance of the video signal of the data value 255 is white, while the density of the data value 255 in printing corresponds to black. Namely, even in the identical color, the data value of the video data is different from that of the print data, and thus the luminance density conversion processing part 21 converts the data values. The color conversion processing part 22 adjusts the parameter about the density data of the ink of Y (yellow), M (magenta) and C (cyan) matching with the color material used in the printer.

Accordingly, the picture image to be printed and outputted is able to be printed and outputted in the appropriate color without haze.

The caption character composite processing part 23 receives the print data and character data 27 of one of the colors Y, M and C from the color conversion processing part 22 to perform the image composite process, and transmits the result thereof to the print data output part to output to a printing part (unillustrated) of the printer.

The data processes in the luminance density conversion processing part 21, color conversion processing part 22, caption character composite processing part 23, and print data output part 24 are controlled by the CPU 25, and the data performed composite process is stored in the memory 26 and read out as the occasion demands.

The composite process in the printer performing color

printing in the second embodiment is described referring to the flowchart in Fig. 7. The flowchart in Fig. 7 shows the procedure for, if the background image has a tone close to the caption character color, changing the caption character data to not white but the other color set in advance so as to make the caption character easy to read. For example, in the case of compositing red caption characters with the background image, if the background image has red shade the same as the caption characters, the caption characters are made easy to read by changing the print data in the caption character part of the composite picture image to green data.

The procedure of the image composite process in color printing is basically the same as the procedure of the composite process in the first embodiment. The different point is that the print dot data of the background image overlapping with the caption characters is considered as not the density data but the tone data, and the caption characters are made stand out by changing not only the density but also the color.

In Fig. 7, if the image composition is designated, the data for one line read in step 201 (one of the data of Y, M and C from the color conversion processing part 22 shown in Fig. 3) is discriminated to be the line including the caption character display area in step 202. About the print dot discriminated to overlap with the caption character drawing part in step 203, the color of the background in the position

of the print dot is calculated in step 204. The calculation of the color of the background image is actually performed for the data of each color of Y, M and C described in Fig. 3 to finally decide the color. The calculation value of the background image color is discriminated whether or not the value is within the range of the value set in advance based on the tone of the caption characters. Namely, it is designated whether or not the tone of the background image of the read print dot resembles to the tone of the caption characters and

is difficult to distinguish. Concretely, for example, the equation for obtaining the hue is formed based on the print data relating to Y, M and C, and the calculation result is compared with the threshold value set in advance based on the tone of the caption characters, so as to decide whether or not the tone of the background image is similar to that of the caption characters.

If the tone of the print dot is discriminated to be within the tone set in advance, the tone of the caption character part is changed to the tone other than the tone originally set as the caption character tone in step 207. The changed tone may be automatically set in advance as one more color when the caption character color is set at first. If the tone of the background image is out of the range of the tone set in advance, the process advances to step 206 and the color set in advance as the caption character color is directly

displayed.

After performing the process for the tone about one print dot, the discrimination is performed whether or not the caption character display area is finished in step 208 in the same way as the first embodiment. If the discrimination is that the caption character display area is finished, the process advances to step 209 to output the print data for one line, and the process for the tone of the next line is performed.

10 As described above, when the tone of the background image is similar to that of the composited caption characters, the tone of the caption character part is changed to a different tone from the background image to be outputted and displayed. Accordingly, it becomes possible to make the caption characters stand out so as to be distinguished easily, irrespective of the tone of the background image.

15 A third embodiment of the present invention is described. The present embodiment outputs, in color printing, a print picture image in which the tone of the caption characters is 20 always the tone different from the background image. The print picture image is similar to the picture image shown in Fig. 1. The procedure of the process of the image composite process of the present invention is described referring to Fig. 8.

25 The point different from the second embodiment is that, in this embodiment, the caption character part is always changed

to the tone different from the background image, irrespective that the tone of the caption characters is similar to the toner of the background image. Namely, in the same way as step 201 to step 204 of Fig. 7, the image color of the print dot of 5 the specific line in the background image corresponding to the drawing part of the caption characters is calculated in step 301 to step 304. In step 305, the image color data of the print dot is always changed to the value different from the image color data of the background image. The changed 10 destination tone may be decided following the equation formed in advance based on the calculated hue data of the print dot of the background image. As a result, the tone of each part of the caption characters always becomes a different tone from that of the background image, and thus the caption characters 15 are able to be made stand out and distinguished easily.

A fourth embodiment of the present invention is described. The first to third embodiments described above make the caption characters easy to distinguish by changing the print dot density or the color data of only the caption 20 character drawing part in the print picture image. However, in the background image used actually, the density and tone may change in a fine cycle. For example, such a case is present wherein, to make the printed picture image appear gray, a fine pattern checker is drawn in a print dot unit so as to make the 25 whole image appear gray. If the caption characters are to be

composed with such a fine pattern background image as described above, the density of the caption characters changes corresponding to the checker pattern of the background image to be reversed to a mosaic pattern. As a result, the density 5 of the caption characters may appear gray and become difficult to be distinguished from the background image. In the same way also in color printing, even if the tone of the caption character drawing part is changed on the background image in which the tone changes with a fine pattern, discrimination of 10 the caption characters may not be improved.

The fourth embodiment makes the discrimination of the caption characters easy, in compositing the caption characters with the background image in which the tone changes with such a fine pattern. Fig. 2 shows the picture image printed and 15 outputted in the present embodiment and displays the image with changing the tone of the background image around the caption characters. In this figure, a background image 5 is composed with caption characters 6 in a print area 4. As obvious from the figure, the tone of the periphery of the 20 caption characters 6 in the background image 5 overlapping with the caption characters 6 is different from the original tone of the background image 5, so as to discriminate the caption characters 6 easily. In the part in which the tone is different around of the caption characters 6, the outline of 25 the background image 5 is able to be discriminated because the

background image 5 is not completely reversed to white.

The procedure of the image composite process of the fourth embodiment is described based on the flowchart in Fig.

9. The processes in steps 401, 402, and 404 are the same as 5 those of the first to third embodiments. The image data for one line is discriminated whether or not the line is the one in which the caption characters are included, and is discriminated whether or not it is the print dot present in the position corresponding to the caption character drawing 10 part. If the discrimination is that the print dot is not the one in the caption character drawing part but the one in the caption character display area 9 (Fig. 5) in steps 403 and 404, the tone data of the print dot is changed to the tone data which is other than the tone set as the caption character 15 color in advance and other than the tone of the background image. Since the caption characters should be made easy to distinguish, the picture image in the caption character display area may be reduced its density or rewritten in completely different color. If the print dot is discriminated 20 to be the one in the caption character drawing part in step 404, the print dot data is left as the tone data set in advance as the caption character color in step 406.

The discrimination is performed whether or not the processes of step 403 to step 406 have been finished for all 25 print dots in the caption character display area in step 407.

If the processes have been finished for all print dots in the caption character display area, the print data for one line is outputted.

- By changing the hue and density of the background image 5 in the caption character peripheral area, the image composition is performed in the state that the caption characters stand out even on the background image changing with a fine pattern. Accordingly, the caption characters are easily discriminated, and the background image is only changed 10 its tone and never reversed, thereby image information is able to be remained to some extent. Thus, even in the case of putting a product or the like as the background image, lack of the information about the product is able to greatly reduced. Though, in the four embodiments described above, the 15 composition of the character data of the caption characters is performed at the timing after the image data is converted to the print data in the color conversion part 22 in Fig. 3, it may be performed at another timing. For example, if the character data of the caption characters is composited before 20 the color conversion is performed in the color conversion part 22, the color of the caption characters is able to be converted together with the color of the background image, and it is prevented that coloring of the caption characters unnaturally stands out in the background image.
- 25 In the four embodiments described above, the case of

compositing the background image with the caption characters which is comparatively smaller than the background image is described. However, the printer of the present invention is applicable as far as in the case of compositing a plurality of 5 picture images and outputting the composite picture image.

[Effects of the Invention]

As described above, in printing and outputting the composite picture image in which the character image is 10 compositized with the background image, the present invention is able to print and output it as the picture image in which the character image is automatically made stand out so as to be easy to distinguish. Accordingly, even in the case of

compositing the caption characters with the background to 15 print, the operation for changing the density and tone of the caption characters in accordance with the density and tone of the background image is unnecessary, and thus print of the composite picture image becomes very easy.

In deciding the position for putting the caption 20 characters, there is no need to select the area of the density and tone appropriate to the caption characters in the background image, and thus, degree of freedom in design of the composite picture image is never limited.

By changing the density and tone of the background image 25 around the character image in the composite picture image,

printing and display are performed with the character image standing out, irrespective of the density of the background image and the image pattern of the tone. Since the background image in that part is only changed the density and tone and is never reversed, lack of the information of the background image is able to be limited to a minimum.

By replacing the background image data in the position overlapping with the character image to the character image data, for example, in the case of compositing white caption 10 characters with a black background image, the picture image in which the caption characters stand out is able to be printed and outputted by means of the very simple method.

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

Fig. 1 is an illustration showing a picture image printed and outputted by the printer relating to a first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is an illustration showing a picture image printed and outputted by the printer relating to another 15 embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a block diagram schematically showing the flow of an image signal of color printing in the printer of the present invention;

Fig. 4 is an illustration showing the arrangement of the 20 printer of the picture image recognized by the printer of

the present invention;

Fig. 5 is an illustration showing the image data constituting the print dot of the character data of a caption character;

Fig. 6 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to the first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a third embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a fourth embodiment of the present invention; and

Fig. 10 is an illustration showing the picture image printed and outputted by a conventional printer.

20 Image data input part

21 Luminance density conversion processing part

22 Color conversion processing part

23 Caption character composite processing part

5 Fig. 6 is a flowchart for performing the image

composition by the printer relating to the first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 7 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a third embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 9 is a flowchart for performing the image composition by the printer relating to a fourth embodiment of the present invention; and

15 Fig. 10 is an illustration showing the picture image

20 [Description of the References]

1, 4, 7 and 11 Printing areas

2, 5, 8 and 12 Background areas

3, 6, and 13 Character images

9 Caption character drawing part

25 10 Caption character display area

なく印刷しやすい状態でキャッシュ用文字が合成された画像イメージを印刷出力することができます。

【0018】また、第1の画像イメージの濃度または色調を変化させる既成を、第2の画像イメージと重なる領域だけではなく第2の画像イメージの周囲を含めた領域にすることにより、第2の画像イメージの濃度または色調を変化させるホールドで、第2の画像イメージを印刷出力します。

【0019】一方で、上記問題点の解決のため、第1の画像イメージと第2の画像イメージを重ね合わせたときに、背景画像内に文字画像で会出する位置に関するデータを、背景画像上での自由度の制約を最小にすることができる位置を提供することである。

やすくることができる。したがって、たとえば背景画像が複雑なパターンで変化する画像であっても、キャッシュや文字等の濃度または色調を細かいパターンで変化させることなく、識別しやすい状態で合成することができる。またさらに、第2の画像イメージのまわりの第1の画像イメージは濃度や色調が変化するだけで白抜きにはならないので、写真等の第1の画像イメージの情報の欠落を最小限に抑えることができる。

[0019] また、第2の画像イメージと重なる領域に40ある第1の画像イメージのデータを削除して新たに第2の画像イメージのデータを入れることにより、第1の画像イメージのデータを第2の画像イメージのデータと置き換えることができる。これにより、たとえば黒色の背景画像に白色のキャッシュ文字を合成する場合は、背景画像の影響を除去してキャッシュ文字を識別しやすくすることができる。

[0020]

[実施例] 以下、図面を参照して本実用の実施例につき説明する。まず最初に、単色で印刷を行うための、本実明の第1の実施例に係るプリント装置について説明す。

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る。図1は、本発明のプリンタ装置によつて印刷出力された画像イメージを表し、記録紙の印刷領域1内で写真等の背景画像2とキャッシュン文字3とが合成されたものであり、キャッシュン文字3の一部分が背景画像2の横幅の大きい部分と重なつてゐる。キャッシュン文字3は、本来は黒色の繪画として印刷表示されるように指定されたものであるが、背景画像2と重なつてゐる部分では背景画像2に対して白抜きで印刷され、濃度が反転して印刷されている。

【0021】図1に示した画像イメージを印刷出力するための画像データークは、図4で定義されるのような印刷データークとして扱われる。印刷データークとは、画像イメージを構成する基底画像である。図4では、印刷領域7内に画像イメージ8が示されており、印刷領域7は、印刷方向Aと垂直な方向に並んだ10×4個のドットと、その10×24個のドットを1ラインとして印刷方向Aの方向に並んだ1280本のラインで構成される。画像イメージ8を構成する印刷データークの位置は、印刷領域7内のライン番号ヒドット番号によって定義される。この印刷領域7を構成するドット数およびライン数は、印刷領域7の大きさおよび画像イメージ8の画素密度などによって異なる。

図1のプリンタ装置によつて印刷出力された画像データークを送出するフローチャートである。

【0025】まず、背景となる画像データークがプリンタ装置に送られると、ステップ101で、画像データークを第1ドットから第mドット目の印字ドットのデータークを指定して説明する。

10 [0026] ステップ101で1ライを読み込んだら、次に、ステップ10 01で読み込んだライイン番号(第nライン文字数01で読み込んだライイン番号を含むライイン番号から)を第nラインがキャッシュン文字数号を含むライイン番号であると判断され号を含むライイン番号であると判断され、 プ103に進み合成処理を実行する。

10 [0027] 次に、ステップ101で1ライ 1で読み込んだライイン番号を含むライイン番号を第nライン(第nライ

(4)

ション文字 3 の印刷ドットも、図 4 の画像イメージ 8 と同様に、印刷領域 7 のライン番号とドット番号によつて定義される。キャプション文字間に隣するプリントデータは背景画像のプリントデータとは別に入力され別個データとして扱われるが、それぞれの画像イメージを構成する印刷ドットの位置は共通のライン番号とドット番号によつて扱われる。また、印刷領域 7 内のキャッシュオン文字を表示可能な位置は、印刷領域 7 内のドット番号ヒライン番号によつてあらかじめ決められている。たとえば、キャッシュオン文字が 20 文字入力されるようになつて示されたプリント装置では、印刷領域 7 内の所定の位置に、キャッシュオン文字が 20 文字表示可能な領域が、ドット番号ヒライン番号によつて設定されている。

【0023】図 5 は、キャッシュオン文字表示領域 9 内のキャッシュオン文字記憶部 10 を印刷ドットのデータとして示したものである。この例では、キャッシュオン文字表示領域 9 は、印刷領域 7 (図 4) 内の第 700 ライン～第 715 ラインの第 1000 ドット～第 1015 ドットの範囲の印刷ドットとして定義されている。キャッシュオン文字表示領域 9 は、プリント装置の仕様としてあらかじめ決めておくこともできるが、使用者が任意に設定してもよい。

【0024】以上説明したような印刷ドットで構成された、図 1 に示したようなキャッシュオン文字 3 の機能が反映された画像イメージを出力するための画像処理の手順たた、図 6 を参照して具体的に説明する。図 6 は、背景画像とキャッシュオン文字を合成して合成画像 (イメージ) 1

置の印刷ドットかどうかを判断
ーション文字線画部分の印刷ドット
合には、ステップ104に進み
ーション文字線画部分と重なら
08に進み、その背景画像の印
理の対象とはせず、そのままフ
される。ステップ104では、
部分と重なると判断された印刷ド
の印刷ドット強度を計算する。
[0028] 次にステップ10
計算された背景画像の印刷ドット
は、背景像がどの程度の強度で
字の強度を反転するかを決める
て、しきい値を調整することに
字の強度と背景像のバラン
き、キャッシュ用文字をもつと
示すことができる。
[0029] ステップ105で
度の計算値がしきい値よりも大
は、ステップ107に進みその
ーション文字線画部分の印刷
データに反映させる。背景画像
値がしきい値よりも小さいとき
みその印刷ドットに対応するキ
の印刷ドットのデータはそのま

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ライシン分のプリントデータを出力するための処理を示す
フローチャートである。

[0025] まず、背景となる画像データとキャバシヨン文字データがプリント装置に送られて画像合成が指示されると、ステップ1001で、画像のプリントデータが1ライシン分読み込まれる。ここではたとえば、ステップ1001で第nライインを第1ドットから読み込みはじめ、第mドット目の印字ドットのデータを読み込んだ場合を想定して説明する。

10 [0026] ステップ1001で1ライシン分の画像データを読み込んだ後、次に、ステップ1002で、ステップ1001で読み込んだライイン番号（第nライイン）がキャバション文字表示領域を含むライイン番号かどうかを判断する。第nライインがキャバション文字表示領域のドット番号を含むライイン番号であると判断されたときは、ステップ1003に読み合成処理を実行する。第nライインがキャバション文字表示領域のドット番号を含むライイン番号ではないと判断されたときはステップ1009に進み、第nライインの1ライシン分の背景画像のデータをそのままプリントデータとして出力する。

20 [0027] 次に、ステップ1003では、ステップ1001で読み込んだライイン（第nライイン）内の印刷ドット（第mドット）がキャバション文字表示部分と重なる位置の印刷ドットかどうかを判断する。該印刷ドットがキャバション文字表示部分の印刷ドットと重なる位置には、ステップ1004に読み合成処理が実行される。キャバション文字表示部分と重ならない場合はステップ1008に進み、その背景画像の印刷ドットは場所の反転処理の対象とはせず、そのままプリントデータとして出力される。ステップ1004では、キャバション文字表示部分と重なると判断された印刷ドットについて、背景画像の印刷ドット濃度を計算する。

30 [0028] 次にステップ1005で、ステップ1004で計算された背景画像の印刷ドット濃度の値が、あらかじめ設定されている濃度のしきい値よりも大きいかどうかを判断する。あらかじめ設定されている濃度のしきい値とは、背景画像がどの程度の濃度のときにキャバション文字の濃度を反転させるかを決めるものである。したがって、しきい値を調整することによって、キャバション文字の濃度と背景の濃度のバランスを適切にすることがで

40 キ、キャバション文字をもっとも隠れしやすい状態で表示することができる。

50 [0029] ステップ1005で背景画像の印刷ドット濃度の計算値がしきい値よりも大きいと判断されたときは、ステップ1007に進みその印刷ドットに対応するキャバション文字表示部分の印刷ドットのデータを白色のデータに反転させる。背景画像の印刷ドット濃度の計算値がしきい値よりも小さいときは、ステップ1006に進みその印刷ドットに対応するキャバション文字表示部分の印刷ドット濃度の計算値をそのまま（黒色）にされる。こ

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刷ドットであると判断された印刷ドットは、ステップ2
0 4 その印刷ドット位置の背景画像色が計算される。
この背景画像色の計算は、実際には図3-3によって背景
画像色のデーターと異なる値に変更される。この変
更される先の色調は、背景画像の印刷ドットの計算され
た色データーから、あらかじめ立てられた計算式に従つ
て決めるこどもできる。これにより、キャッシュン文字
の各部分の色調が背景画像の色調とは常に異なる色調に
なるので、キャッシュン文字を確立させることができ
別が容易になる。

10 [0 0 4 5] たゞ、太発明に係る第4の実施例につき説
明する。以上に説明した第1から第3までの実施例は、
印刷画像イメージにおいてキャッシュン文字描画部分だ
けの印刷ドットの濃度や色のデーターを変更することでキャ
ッシュン文字を識別しやすくしたものである。しかし
実際には使用される背景画像としては、濃度や色調が細か
い周期で変化している場合がある。たとえば、印刷され
た画像イメージが灰色に見えるようにするために、印刷
ドット単位で細かいバーンの形状を描き、全体と
して灰色に見えるようになる結果である。そのような細
かいバーンの背景画像にキャッシュン文字を合成しない
うとすると、キャッシュン文字の強度が背景画像の市井
模様のパターンに対応して変化し、強度が反転されてモ
ザイク模様になり、結果的にキャッシュン文字の強
度に見えるようになつて背景画像との混ざりが困難にな
ることがある。カラー印刷の場合も同じように、細かい
バーンで色調が変化する背景画像でキャッシュン文字
模様部分の色調を変化させても、キャッシュン文字の強
度を改善できない場合がある。

20 [0 0 4 6] 第4の実施例は、キャッシュン文字をこの
ように細かいバーンで色調が変化する背景画像に合成
する場合に、キャッシュン文字を識別しやすくしたもの
である。図2は本実施例によって印刷出力された画像イ
メージであり、キャッシュン文字周辺の背景画像の色調
を変化させて表示させたものである。この図では、印刷
領域4内に背景画像5とキャッシュン文字6が合成され
ている。この図から分かるように、キャッシュン文字6
が重なっている背景画像5のキャッシュン文字6周辺部
分の色調が、本家の背景画像5の色調と異なつてお
り、キャッシュン文字6が識別しやすくなっている。このキ
ャッシュン文字6周辺の色調が異なつてている部分は、背
景画像5が完全に白抜きになつてないだけで、背景画
像5の輪郭などが識別できる状態になつている。

30 [0 0 4 7] 図9のフローチャートに基づいて、
第4の実施例の画像合成処理の手順について説明する。
ステップ4-0 1、4-0 2、4-0 4の処理は第1～第3の
実施例と同じであり、1ライン分の画像データについて
そのラインがキャッシュン文字の入るラインかどうかを
判断し、そしてキャッシュン文字線画部分に対応する位
置にある印刷ドットかどうかを判断する。ステップ4-0

40 [0 0 4 8] 本実施例による画像合成処理の手順を図8
を参照して説明する。本実施例の第2の実施例と異なる
点は、本実施例ではキャッシュン文字の色
文字部分を常に背景画像と異なる色調に変化させる点で
ある。つまりステップ3-0 1からステップ3-0 4では図
7のステップ2-0 1からステップ2-0 4と同様に、キャ
ッシュン文字を出力させることで、印刷画像イメージとし
ては図1に示した画像イメージと類似している。

50 [0 0 4 9] 本実施例による画像合成処理の手順を図8
を参照して説明する。本実施例の第2の実施例と異なる
点は、本実施例ではキャッシュン文字の色調が背景画像
の色調が似ているかどうかにかかわらず、キャッシュン
文字部分を常に背景画像と異なる色調に変化させる点で
ある。つまりステップ3-0 1からステップ3-0 4では図
7のステップ2-0 1からステップ2-0 4と同様に、キャ

3, 404 でその印刷ドットが、キャブション文字表示領域部分の印刷ドットではないが、キャブション文字表示領域9 (図5) の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ405で、その印刷ドットとして色調のデータを、あらかじめキャブション文字として設定された色調以外の色調でかぶせられた色調のデータに変更する。このキャブション文字表示領域の画像イメージは、キャブション文字を識別しやすくてよいので、色度や濃度を小さくしたりあるいは全く別の色に書き換えてよい。ステップ404で印刷ドットがキャブション文字表示領域部分の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ406でその印刷ドットのデータをキャブション文字色としてあらかじめ設定された色調のデータのままにしておく。

[0048] 次にステップ407で、キャブション文字表示領域内の全ての印刷ドットについてステップ403からステップ406までの処理が終わつたかどうか判断し、キャブション文字表示領域内の全ての印刷ドットについて終了した場合には、ステップ408でプリンタ部分のプリントデータを出力する。

[0049] このように、キャブション文字周辺領域の背景画像の色調や濃度を変化させることによって、細かいパターンで変化する背景画像であってもキャブション文字を際立せた状態で画面合成することができる。したがって、キャブション文字を識別しやすくなることができ、かつ背景画像は色調が変わらなければ白抜きにならず画像情報をある程度残すことができる。背景画像として商品などを入れる場合でも商品に関する情報が欠落を極めて低く抑えことができる。

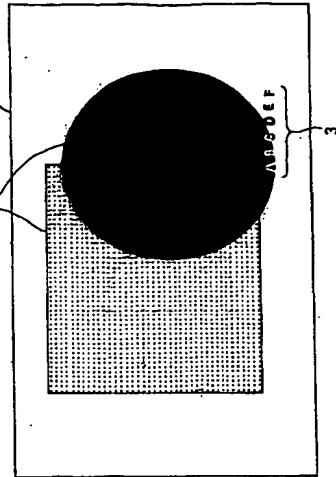
[0050] なお、以上説明した4つの実施例では、キャブション文字の文字データを合成するタイミングとして、図3の色変換部2で画像データをプリントデータに変換した後で、他のタイミングでもよい。たとえば、色変換部2で色変換を行う前にキャブション文字の文字データを合成すれば、キャブション文字の色を背景画像と共に色変換することができます。キャブション文字の色が背景画像から不自然に隠立つことを防ぐことができる。

[0051] さらに、以上説明した4つの実施例では、背景画像にその背景画像よりも比較的小さなキャブション文字を合成する場合について説明したが、本発明のプリンタ装置は、複数の画像イメージを合成して合成画像イメージを出力する場合であれば適用可能である。

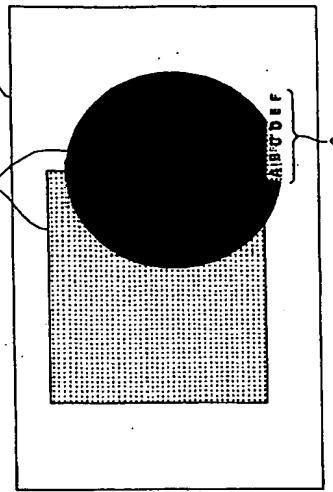
[0052] [発明の效果] 以上のように、本発明によれば、背景画像に文字画像を合成した合成画像を印刷出力する場合に、自動的に文字画像を背景画像から隠立させて識別しやすくした画像イメージとして印刷出力することができる。したがって、背景画像にキャブション文字の濃度や合成して印刷する場合でも、キャブション文字の濃度や

2.2 色変換処理部
2.3 キャブション文字合成処理部
2.4 プリントデータ出力部
2.5 CPU
2.6 メモリ
2.7 文字データ

[図1]



[図2]



3, 404 でその印刷ドットが、キャブション文字表示領域部分の印刷ドットではないが、キャブション文字表示領域9 (図5) の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ405で、その印刷ドットとして色調のデータを、あらかじめキャブション文字として設定された色調以外の色調でかぶせられた色調のデータに変更する。このキャブション文字表示領域の画像イメージは、キャブション文字を識別しやすくてよいので、色度や濃度を小さくしたりあるいは全く別の色に書き換えてよい。ステップ404で印刷ドットがキャブション文字表示領域部分の印刷ドットであると判断された場合は、ステップ406でその印刷ドットのデータをキャブション文字色としてあらかじめ設定された色調のデータのままにしておく。

[0048] 次にステップ407で、キャブション文字表示領域内の全ての印刷ドットについてステップ403からステップ406までの処理が終わつたかどうか判断し、キャブション文字表示領域部分のプリントデータを出力する。

[0049] このように、キャブション文字周辺領域の背景画像の色調や濃度を変化させることによって、細かいパターンで変化する背景画像であってもキャブション文字を際立せた状態で画面合成することができる。したがって、キャブション文字を識別しやすくなることができ、かつ背景画像は色調が変わらなければ白抜きにならず画像情報をある程度残すことができる。背景画像として商品などを入れる場合でも商品に関する情報が欠落を極めて低く抑えことができる。

[0050] なお、以上説明した4つの実施例では、キャブション文字の文字データを合成するタイミングとして、図3の色変換部2で画像データをプリントデータに変換した後で、他のタイミングでもよい。たとえば、色変換部2で色変換を行う前にキャブション文字の文字データを合成すれば、キャブション文字の色を背景画像と共に色変換することができます。キャブション文字の色が背景画像から不自然に隠立つことを防ぐことができる。

[0051] さらに、以上説明した4つの実施例では、背景画像にその背景画像よりも比較的小さなキャブション文字を合成する場合について説明したが、本発明のプリンタ装置は、複数の画像イメージを合成して合成画像イメージを出力する場合であれば適用可能である。

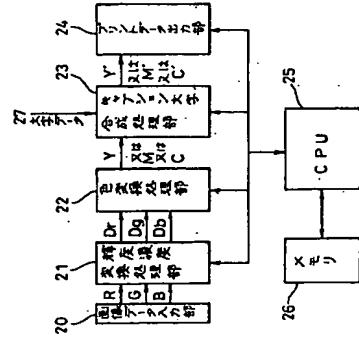
[0052] [発明の效果] 以上のように、本発明によれば、背景画像に文字画像を合成した合成画像を印刷出力する場合に、自動的に文字画像を背景画像から隠立させて識別しやすくした画像イメージとして印刷出力することができる。したがって、背景画像にキャブション文字の濃度や合成して印刷する場合でも、キャブション文字の濃度や

2.2 色変換処理部
2.3 キャブション文字合成処理部
2.4 プリントデータ出力部
2.5 CPU
2.6 メモリ
2.7 文字データ

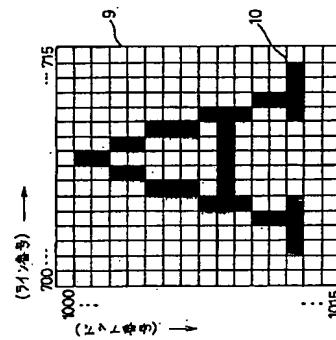
[図1]

1. 4、7、1.1 印刷領域
2、5、8、1.2 背景領域
3、6、1.3 文字画像
9 キャブション文字複数部
10 キャブション文字表示領域
20 画像データ入力部
50 輝度濃度変換処理部

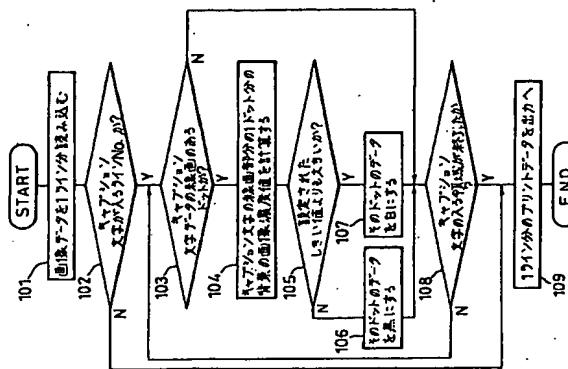
[図3]



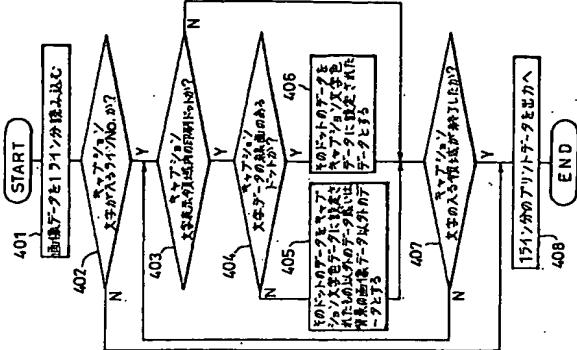
[図5]



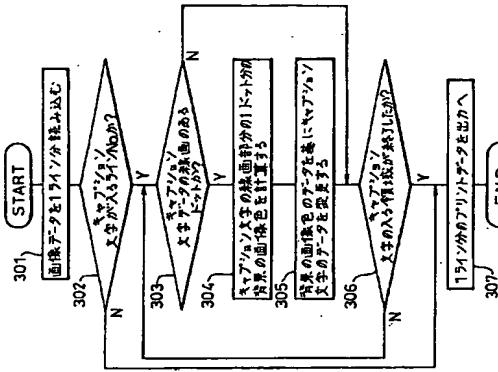
[図6]



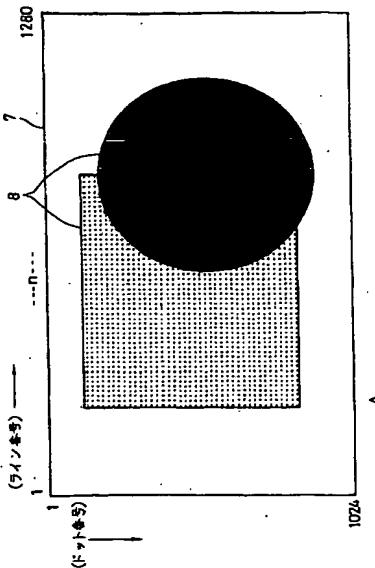
[図7]



[図8]



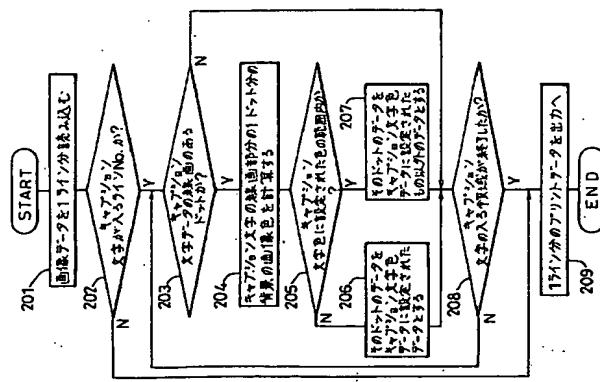
[図4]



(1)

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【図7】



【図10】

